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OW DO YOU HELP A PROMINENT AVIONICS COMPANY MANAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF CUTTING-EDGE IN-FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT DISPLAYS, ON A SHORT SCHEDULE, WITH A HARSH PENALTY FOR DELAY?

Using our proven planning methods and project management control processes, we were able to help this long-standing customer deliver a top-quality product on time and avoid potential penalties.

CHALLENGES

SHORT SCHEDULE

While this project was similar to others we've done with this customer, it had to be executed considerably faster than normal. The development cycle for a product of this kind is generally around 18 months; this one needed to be ready in 11. This meant the schedule had to be compressed significantly, and many tasks needed to happen simultaneously instead of in their traditional order.

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES

Our customer had already signed a contract that included a penalty of almost \$1 million for failure to deliver the new units by the agreed-upon date. Nearly every project experiences delays, but in this case, pushing back the completion date even one day was not an option. Regardless of what setbacks were encountered, we needed to provide a responsive, rigorous plan that would allow the project to get back on track quickly.

NEW TEAM

The team charged with developing this new product was split between Japan and California. Most had never before participated in a project of this size and were unfamiliar with PMAlliance's methodology. In addition, the process was complicated by a language and cultural barrier, as English was not a primary language for the majority of the team. This resulted in continuous learning on both sides, without a lot of time in which to do it.

HARDWARE CHANGES

This product was the first in a new line of in-flight displays, and the customer intended to standardize parts between all members of this line as much as possible. Unfortunately, this initiative resulted in a last-minute decision to change a core component of the new monitor. Since we were already operating on a shortened development cycle, we had to respond to this hardware change quickly and with no errors.

SOLUTIONS

FACE-TO-FACE PLANNING

Our first step was to send our team to Japan. The introductory period and training had to be done face-to-face – not only because it was easier and faster, but because it helped us to build a relationship with the new team. This initial visit left us with a plan that met all of the customer's criteria, setting the stage for a successful partnership.

PROVEN PROCESSES

Implementing our Duration-Driven planning process was the first step we took in developing and compressing the schedule. Instead of treating each task as a checkpoint to be completed before the next step could begin, multiple steps were carried out simultaneously. This helped shorten development time and allowed the team to identify errors quickly. When the core component was changed, the initial projected delay was nearly two months. Using our process, the customer was able to continually compress the schedule every week and get the project back on track.

LEVERAGING PAST SUCCESS

Since this was the first time we've worked with this team, they were initially skeptical about our involvement. However, our record of past success with similar projects reassured them and they were willing to try our methods. Their willingness to trust us based on our past experience helped to smooth out the training process and build the rapport needed to get the project started on the right foot.

THE FIRST IN A NEW LINE OF CUTTING-EDGE PRODUCTS WAS DELIVERED ON TIME, WITH NO COSTLY DELAYS.

CONSTANT COMMUNICATION

With so many stages of the project occurring simultaneously, it was very important to maintain constant communication between all the sub-teams. One of the key elements of our process is keeping the management team updated on delays and potential issues to ensure quick reactions and give them enough time to think through all available options. This accelerated the team's response to delays, and allowed us to communicate lessons learned to teams working on other products within the same division.

RESULTS

Our customer delivered its new, cutting-edge product to the buyer on time and to exact quality expectations, avoiding any penalty for schedule delays. Thanks to the efforts of this team and the launch of a new line of products, the client has gained further recognition as a leader in their industry.

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PMalliance is a team of certified project management professionals who have years of real-world experience. We provide training, consulting, and project management office development services for our clients worldwide, from Fortune 1000 companies, to multi-national businesses, to entrepreneurial ventures.

**OUR
METHODOLOGY**

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**Your
Success®**